9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

portant for their flocks and herds, divided it as follows. There was the 'Dunántúl', or 'country beyond the Danube', i.e. the part lying within the bend of the Danube, or West Hungary; the Észák, or north, more commonly known as the Felvidék or Upper District; the Alföld, or plain, between the Danube and the Tisza; the Tiszántúl, or 'country beyond the Tisza'—the plain east of the Tisza; the 'right bank of the Tisza', in the north-east of Hungary; Transylvania, and the 'corner between the Tisza and Maros', afterwards known as the Bánát. Later events gave to the triangle enclosed between the lower reaches of the Tisza and the Danube the name of Bácska, and more recently still the extreme north-east corner of Hungary—the Podkarpatska Rus, or Carpatho-Ruthenia of Czechoslovakia, received the name of Kárpátálja (the country at the foot of the Carpathians).

Of these, the Treaty of Trianon left Hungary with only the Dunántúl (slightly diminished), a small part of Észák, the northern and central Alföld, without the Bácska, and part of the Tiszántúl. For geographical purposes, there is no noticeable distinction between the two last named; and Trianon Hungary falls naturally into two main divisions: Western and Northern Hungary (the Dunántúl and the Észák) and the Great Plain (the Alföld and the Tiszántúl).

THE TWO HALVES OF TRIANON HUNGARY. This division is more than geographical; that is, the dividing line of the Danube has in the past given the two halves of Hungary separate histories, which have resulted in social, political and spiritual

9: Epstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

differences. The west was for some centuries a Roman province (as was Transylvania, for a rather shorter period), while Central Hungary was still the camping-ground of wild nomads, such as Attila's Huns. The west has always been more exposed to Western, and particularly to Austrian, influence and infiltration. Above all, a considerable part of the west escaped the Turkish conquest, remaining under the comparative shelter of the Austrian armies. One result of this was that, while nearly all Hungary accepted the Protestant Faith (chiefly in its Calvinist form) in the sixteenth century, the west and north were reconverted to Roman Catholicism under the Counter-Reformation. The feudal institutions imported from Austria struck deep roots only in the west, which became the home of vast estates owned by princely families. When the east was resettled in the eighteenth century, huge estates were founded there also, but there was more mobility and less permanence. In politics, the west is more 'legitimist', i.e. more attached to the Habsburgs, while the east is more 'nationalist'. This difference is expressed in the Magyar words 'labanc' and 'kuruc', of which the former is derived from an old term meaning an Austrian soldier, while the latter is a corruption of the word 'crusader'. The Calvinist of the Alföld regards himself as the true Magyar and despises the man of the Dunántúl as 'half a Swabian'. The west, returning the compliment, points out that only among its own hills and valleys has there been any degree of continuity of population. The inhabitants of the plains, it says, are some of them Turks, the rest immigrants. It is true that while

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

in most of the west (the fringe assigned to Austria in 1920 excepted), the Magyars have been able to absorb the foreign influences which penetrated there, the plain has not yet had time to digest the enormous numbers of immigrants which poured into it from 1700 onward. The centre of it is, it is true, purely Magyar to-day, and it is here that the most characteristic forms of Hungarian national life are found. But in the south and east of it the Magyars never recovered the ground which they lost under the Turks, and in fact these areas were split off from Hungary in 1920 on the strength of their non-Magyar majority. Most of the north was, of course, detached for the same reason; here the Slovak and Ruthene peoples had had a continuous existence from early times, and the Magyars had never penetrated in large numbers, although the landowners and the officials had been Magyars, or had adopted the Magyar language and ways.

WESTERN HUNGARY. The Dunántúl is not only sheltered by the Danube from the east, its whole geographical position is less open than that of the Alföld. It is a plain, by comparison with the Alps or the Carpathians, and most of it is low-lying; but it is traversed by several ranges of considerable height, the most important of which, beginning in a series of curious isolated hills of volcanic origin north of Lake Balaton, runs in more continuity through the regions known as the Bakony Forest and the Vertes hills, and reaches the Danube above Buda. The Bakony is the only part of Trianon Hungary which contains any large forests. Up to a century ago it was famous as a haunt of 'betyárs'

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

423 striking feature of which is the unequal distribution
565 of the land. Nearly one-third of the whole area of the country consists of big estates and is in the hands of a small group of great landowners. The biggest of these, Prince Eszterházy, still owns something like 150,000 English acres, and estates of 20,000, 30,000 or 50,000 acres are not uncommon. Another quarter of the country is taken up by large and comfortable medium-sized farms, the houses, for the most part, of the 'lesser nobility' or 'gentry' as the Hungarians call them, corresponding to the 'squire' of the village, or else of yeoman farmers, usually of Swabian origin. Another quarter again is in the form of small farms whose occupants, the real peasants, are just able to get out of them a living for themselves and their families. The remaining sixth has been divided and sub-divided into a vast number of tiny holdings which are no longer able adequately to support their owners, who constitute the majority of the agricultural population. Below this class of 'dwarf-holder' there comes a great mass of population, the 'rural proletariat' which owns no land at all.

184 REGIONAL DIFFERENCES. These proportions of a
423 third, a quarter, a quarter and a sixth are not, in-
565 deed, uniform throughout the country. The stronghold of the big estates is West Hungary, where the 'feudal' system has been able to develop unchecked throughout the centuries. Here, too, the population was not reduced by the Turkish wars, and the sub-division of the peasant holdings was already going on in the seventeenth and eighteenth

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

centuries. In the Great Plain, which was largely resettled after the Turkish wars, the proportion of yeoman farmers is much higher, and in the south and south-east, where the landlord class was wiped out altogether in the wars and the country completely recolonized, most of the population consists of peasant free-holders. These are, however, very largely Germans, the descendants of colonists brought in by the Habsburg Emperors. It is a little-known but important fact that of all the nationalities in the old Hungary, it was the Magyars among whom the largest class of 'landless proletariat' was to be found. Thus, even if the landlords in the territories left to Hungary by the Treaty of Trianon had not successfully resisted the reforms carried through against their class in the areas assigned to Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, conditions in the contracted kingdom would still have been particularly difficult. As they did resist any large-scale reform, those conditions have to-day reached a stage of acute crisis. A small measure of land distribution was indeed carried through in 1920, but on quite an inadequate scale.

PROPORTION OF LANDED TO LANDLESS. According to a census taken in 1935, four and a half million people in Hungary were then 'engaged in agriculture'. Of these, about one-third owned or leased enough land to support themselves and their families. These ranged from the great landowners, with their thousands or even tens of thousands of acres, through the small country gentlemen or prosperous yeoman farmers, down to the smallholders who could manage to make ends meet.